

DCI/IC 76-3525
27 May 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community

FROM : [REDACTED] Chairman, Security Committee
[REDACTED] Chairman, Intelligence
Information Handling Committee

SUBJECT : Should ERDA Laboratories Be Authorized to
Participate in the COINS System?

Statement of the Problem

1. Should approval be granted for installation of the Community On-Line Intelligence System (COINS) in certain ERDA laboratories?

Facts Bearing on the Problem

2. General Giller, Director, Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) wrote to ASD(I) under date of 10 May 1976, requesting permission to install a COINS (Community On-Line Intelligence System) terminal at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California for a six months trial. If that proved useful, COINS terminals would be installed at three other laboratories. General Giller's letter is at Tab A.

3. In justification of his request, General Giller cited a letter to him from Mr. Bush dated 12 March 1976, which advised that the DCI is approving a revised DCID 1/7 (DCI Policy Paper on Information Release to Contractors). In the revised DCID, ERDA laboratories are excluded from the "contractor" category. Mr. Bush's letter is at Tab B.

4. Mr. Norman Solat, ASD(I) staff, visited the Chairmen of the Security and Information Handling Committees to solicit our reaction to General Giller's request. He reported that Mr. Latimer was inclined to respond favorably.

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5. DoD agencies and the military services and commands have been the principal users of COINS. In 1973, Dr. Schlesinger, as DCI, and Dr. Hall, ASD(I) agreed that the latter should become Executive Agent to improve the usefulness of COINS as a community mechanism. This involved steps to upgrade the technical operation and equipment of the network, and efforts to improve the quality and timeliness of COINS files.

6. While naming ASD(I) as Executive Agent, the DCI retained a general overview responsibility, because COINS originally was sponsored by the PFIAB (1965), and that body has always continued to look to the DCI on this matter. The DCI's responsibility was exercised through the IC Staff, and the Chairman IHC was designated as the DCI action officer.

7. Since 1973, ASD(I) has moved energetically with the help of contractors to improve the technical characteristics of the COINS network. A separate budget now exists and a COINS staff of about 20 people has been provided. The COINS Program Management Office is housed at NSA, Fort Meade.

8. Dr. Schlesinger, as DCI, approved upgrading the COINS network to include TOP SECRET TALENT/KEYHOLE data, and today over 50% of the total user queries are levied on the NPIC imagery files. Most of the remaining files (about 50) relate to military order-of-battle and military installations of foreign countries, and SIGINT data.

9. DIA, NSA and NPIC are the principal contributors of files to COINS. Other than NPIC, CIA has contributed only three or four files, and CIA has strongly resisted a larger commitment. CIA analysts have not found COINS data very useful for their purposes.

10. State/INR makes almost no use of COINS files. ASD(I) is pressing State to provide COINS access to the automated State Department cable system. State is not sympathetic to such a request. The matter is not now ripe for decision, but it is likely to reach the DCI and NFIB level later this year.

11. The foregoing facts indicate that considerable tension now exists between ASD(I) on the one hand and State and CIA on the other with respect to the scope and use of COINS files in the future.

12. Although General Giller's letter does not make it clear, Mr. George Hicken, the COINS Program Manager, advises that ERDA could become a COINS participant only upon completion of the network telecommunications upgrade. That upgrade to the COINS II network will not be completed for 12-18 months from the present date.

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13. Mr. Hicken advises, also, that a considerable amount of data in COINS files is now received by ERDA in the form of magnetic tapes, which ERDA screens before making available pertinent extracts to its laboratory personnel. Approval of an on-line access to COINS files would eliminate this screening which ERDA finds somewhat burdensome.

14. Mr. Hicken reports that in the future upgraded COINS II network provision will be made so that certain subscribers can be prevented from gaining access to certain files. In other words, the computer software will exist to control and prevent unrestricted access to the total COINS system, where such control is deemed appropriate.

Discussion

15. While the four ERDA weapon laboratories were exempted from contractor status in the attachment to revised DCID 1/7, this exemption was only for the purpose of allowing for a flow of intelligence data on a need-to-know basis.

16. At the time the policy paper was written, there was no consideration given to allowing these laboratories to have unrestricted access to data banks, such as COINS.

17. With the placement of terminals in the laboratories, there is the opportunity for access to all of the file holdings in COINS, which could preclude the need-to-know determination from being made. Full access to all COINS files could be limited by software (see para. 14) but there has been no policy discussion to date as to this possibility.

18. Since implementation of the ERDA request cannot be accomplished for some 12-18 months, it is not essential that we rush to a decision on General Giller's request. There appears to be time for community consideration of possible policy implications.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. It is recommended that Mr. Latimer be advised by Admiral Murphy that the ERDA request should be referred to the DCI Security Committee for coordination within the Intelligence Community and for report to the DCT

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Attachments (2)
As stated

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